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## **Rover Pipeline moves forward - Federal agency's draft of impact statement recommends approval**

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### **Gas Pipeline**

ADRIAN - A draft report by a federal agency gives the Rover natural gas pipeline project the go-ahead.

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission prepared a draft environmental impact statement for the Rover Pipeline, Panhandle Backhaul and Trunkline Backhaul projects.

"The FERC staff concludes that construction and operation of the projects would have some adverse and significant environmental impacts; however, these impacts would be reduced to acceptable levels with the implementation of Rover's, Panhandle's and Trunkline's proposed mitigation and the additional measures recommended by staff in the draft EIS," according to the statement.

"This determination is based on a review of the information provided by Rover, Panhandle, and Trunkline and further developed from data requests; field investigations; scoping; literature research; alternatives analyses; and contacts with the federal, state, and local agencies, Native American tribes, and other stakeholders," the statement reads.

Among the commission staff's recommendations is asking Rover to develop a property owner insurance tracking and mitigation plan.

The Rover pipeline is expected to enter Lenawee County near Morenci and will pass west of Adrian, then go through Franklin Township into Washtenaw County, if constructed according to current plans.

The project will see a \$4.2 billion pipeline gather gas from processing plants in West Virginia, eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania for delivery to a hub near Defiance, Ohio. That is where roughly 68 percent of the gas will be delivered via interconnections with existing pipelines in Ohio and West Virginia for distribution to markets across the United States.

The report rejects a suggested alternate route through Lenawee County that would parallel existing pipeline rights of way. That would have had the Rover pipeline run from Defiance, Ohio, northeast through Fulton County in Ohio to an existing valve site near Riga before turning toward Clinton where it would enter Washtenaw County and head north to Pinckney.

The report said FERC received several letters suggesting this alternative.

"Both routes would require a crossing of a recreation area (Brighton Recreation Area by the alternative route and Pinckney Recreation Area by the proposed route)," the report said. "These recreation areas offer similar recreational opportunities, such as camping, hiking, fishing, cross-country skiing, and would be subject to similar crossing lengths (about 1.5 miles)."

While fewer forested lands would be affected and there would be fewer streams crossed by the alternate route, it would be "11.1 miles longer than the proposed route, potentially impacting 136.6 more acres during construction. Furthermore, the Panhandle Route Alternative could result in the expansion of the existing right-of-way to up to 200 feet wide in some locations, further impacting additional landowners already encumbered by three pipeline easements," the report said.

"Taking everything into consideration, we conclude that the Panhandle Route Alternative does not offer a significant environmental advantage over the proposed route, and are therefore are not recommending it," report said.

Another proposed natural gas pipeline, the Nexus, would cross through eastern Lenawee County as it passes from Ohio to an existing pipeline near Ypsilanti.

The Rover report provided project details as the pipeline is planned to cross through Lenawee County, with information about needed workforce and expected socioeconomic impacts.

The environmental impact statement shows Rover planners anticipate its total payroll would be \$620 million during the construction phase: \$10.56 million in Pennsylvania, \$53.31 million in West Virginia, \$495.54 million in Ohio and \$60.91 million in Michigan.

The estimated socioeconomic impact resulting from construction and operation of the Rover has Lenawee County's portion of the construction payroll projected at \$23.5 million while total estimated payroll tax is nearly \$7 million. The estimated annual property tax paid within the county is \$2.4 million.

"Construction of the Rover Project would have a short-term, beneficial effect in terms of increased payroll and local material purchases. Because about 50 percent of the workers are expected to be local, and non-local workers would temporarily relocate to the project area, a substantial portion of the payroll would likely be spent with local vendors and businesses," the statement reads.

Rover has currently contracted the purchase of \$74.4 million in materials from local and regional manufacturers and suppliers along the entire route, according to the federal agency's environmental impact statement.

FERC officials said construction of Rover would also result in increased state and local sales tax revenues associated with the purchase of some construction materials, as well as goods and services bought by the construction workforce.

"We do not expect the Rover Project to have any long-term negative economic impact," the statement reads, adding the pipeline would be installed underground and any surface impacts, such as damaged roads, would be repaired.

"Once installed, the pipeline would not impede normal surface traffic or access to businesses and most pre-construction property uses would be allowed," the document reads.

In the statement, commission staff said they believe the long-term positive economic impacts from the proposed pipeline include an increase in annual property taxes paid by Rover to counties where the project components would be located.

"This increase in property taxes paid would benefit the local governments and their budgets annually for

the life of the Rover Project," the statement reads.

Rover also would be responsible for any increase in valuation for property tax purposes resulting from operation of the pipeline project. FERC officials said the landowner would not bear responsibility for increased property taxes resulting from installation or operation of the pipeline.

Comments on the draft environmental impact statement must be received in Washington, D.C., on or before April 11. To read or learn more about the pipeline's environmental impact state, go to [tinyurl.com/RoverDEIS](http://tinyurl.com/RoverDEIS) or call 866-208-3372.